BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

2023

BLACK IS...

BOOKLIST FOR ADULTS, TEENS, & CHILDREN

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The Black Is Booklist

is a list of recent books for all ages concerning the African American experience. It is published as part of the Boston Public Library's observance of Black History Month each year.

Compiled by Boston Public Library staff:

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Research Service Librarian, Central Library

On the Cover: Alice Walker, author of *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire*.

Photograph by Ana Elena Pena.

CHILDREN

Be Real, Macy Weaver

By Lakita Wilson

Determined to find a new best friend in Brynn, who's smart, kind, and beautiful, 11-year-old Macy turns one small lie into a whole new life to win her over — until everything falls apart.

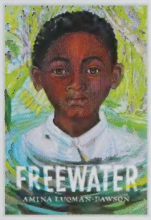
J FICTION WILSON

Because of You, John Lewis

By Andrea Davis Pinkney and Keith Henry Brown (ill.)

The true story of Congressman John Lewis' inspiring friendship with 10-year-old activist Tybre Faw is relayed in this remarkable picture book.

J BIOG E185.97.L49 P56 2022

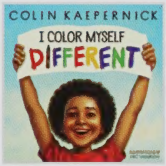


Freewater

By Amina Luqman-Dawson

Based on an underrepresented part of Antebellum history, this middle-grade novel tells the inspiring tale of a twelve-year-old boy who escapes enslavement. With the help of a secret community, he finds the courage to return to the plantation and free his mother.

J FICTION LUQMANDA A



I Color Myself Different

By Colin Kaepernick and Eric Wilkerson (ill.)

A joyful celebration of Black and Brown lives from athlete and activist Colin Kaepernick, whose life story provides a valuable lesson on the power of self-love.

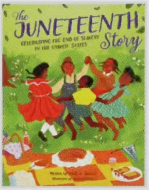
J GV939.K25 A3 2022x

It's the End of the World and I'm in My Bathing Suit

By Justin A. Reynolds

In this humorous, dystopian middle-grade novel, twelve-year-old Eddie and his friends set out to investigate when the electricity goes out. They soon make the startling discovery that they are the only ones left in their neighborhood... and perhaps the only people left anywhere.

J FICTION REYNOLDS J



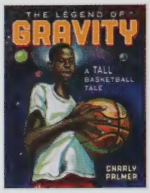
The Juneteenth Story

By Aliah L. Agostini and Sawyer Cloud

The history of Juneteenth and the holiday's journey to national recognition is given thorough and respectful treatment in this highly informative picture book.

J HOLIDAY E185.93.T4 A36 2022x

available as an audiobook
available as an eBook
graphic novel

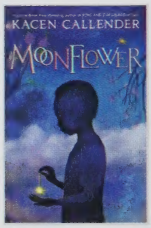


The Legend of Gravity: A Tall Basketball Tale

By Charly Palmer

With the help of a clever narrator and stylized illustrations, this colorful and energetic picture book tells a story of teamwork and the unsung legends of streetball.

J PICTURE PALMER C

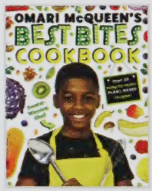


Moonflower

By Kacen Callender

Overwhelmed by their depression, Moon escapes to the spirit realm every night. When the realm is threatened, they must embark on a magical adventure of love and acceptance to save the spirit world... and themself.

J FICTION CALLENDE K

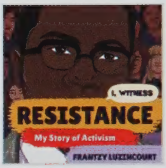


Omari McQueen's Best Bites Cookbook

By Omari McQueen

In this easy-to-use cookbook, Omari shares his favorite plant-based dishes, creating a fun and accessible recipe guide to encourage the next generation of vegan cooks.

J TX837 .M47257 2022x



Resistance: My Story of Activism

By Frantzy Luzincourt and Zainab Nasrati (ed.)

A compelling work of narrative nonfiction aimed at middle-grade readers sheds light on teen activist Frantzy Luzincourt's fight for equal education, racial justice, and economic equity.

J BIOG E185.97.L89 A3 2022

The Year We Learned to Fly

By Jacqueline Woodson and Rafael López

A poetic narrative about the resilience of African American ancestry tells the story of a brother and sister who discover the ability to lift themselves up and imagine a better world.

J PICTURE WOODSON J

TEEN

A Girl's Guide to Love and Magic

By Debbie Rigaud

When her aunt, an influencer known for dabbling in vodou, is possessed by a mischievous spirit, Haitian-American teen Cicely Destin enlists the help of her best friend and her crush to set things right.

TEEN FICTION RIGAUD D

Augusta Savage

By Marilyn Nelson

A powerful biography in verse about Augusta Savage, who was a trailblazing artist of the 1930s, the first-ever recorded Black gallerist, and a pillar of the Harlem Renaissance.

TEEN BIOG PS3573.A4795 A94 2022

Batter Royale

By Leisl Adams

In this rom-com graphic novel, a small-town waitress and her best friend find themselves unexpectedly thrust into the intense and bizarre world of competitive baking.

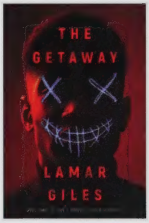
TEEN GRAPHIC BATTER ROYALE

Blood Scion

By Deborah Falaye

As a descendant of the Orisha gods, Sloane can incinerate enemies at will, a power she must conceal when she's conscripted into the army on her fifteenth birthday. But can she rise through the ranks without becoming the very monster she abhors?

TEEN SCIFI FANTASY FALAYE D

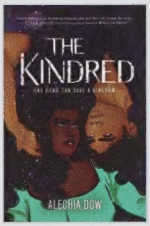


The Getaway

By Lamar Giles

When a famous resort offers the richest and most powerful families a haven from a world ravaged by droughts, fires, and floods, its live-in employees learn just how far the wealthy will go to save themselves.

TEEN FICTION GILES L



The Kindred

By Alechia Dow

When Duke Felix Hamdi is accused of murdering the royal family, he goes on the run with Joy, the commoner who is mentally connected to him through the intergalactic Kindred mind-pairing system.

TEEN SCIFI FANTASY DOW A

Mirror Girls

By Kelly McWilliams

After being separated as infants, two biracial twins reunite in the Jim Crow South, where they set out to uncover the truth behind their parents' murders and break the family curse.

TEEN FICTION MCWILLIA K

available as an audiobook
available as an eBook
graphic novel

Nothing Burns as Bright as You

By Ashley Woodfolk

A novel told in verse by an acclaimed author tells the story of two best friends who become something more over the course of one wild and reckless day.

TEEN FICTION WOODFOLK A

Required Reading for the Disenfranchised Freshman

By Kristen R. Lee

A college freshman grapples with the challenges of attending an elite university with a disturbing racist history, which may not be as distant as it seems.

TEEN FICTION LEE K

Right Where I Left You

By Julian Winters

In this sweet friends-to-lovers romance about Black boy joy, Isaac Martin plans to attend an epic comic convention with his best friend, Diego, during their final summer before college.

TEEN FICTION WINTERS J

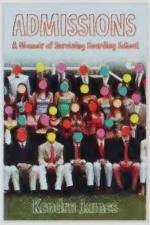
Seton Girls

By Charlene Thomas

A group of girls at an elite private high school uncovers the awful secret behind the thirteen-year win streak of the school's beloved football team.

TEEN FICTION THOMAS C

BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIR



Admissions: A Memoir of Surviving Boarding School

By Kendra James

Now an admissions officer specializing in diversity recruitment, James recounts her negative experiences at a predominantly white boarding school, where she became the poster child for diversity and endured countless microaggressions.

BIOG LA2317.J35 A3 2022

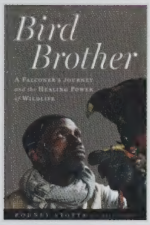
Ain't That a Mother: Postpartum, Palsy, and Everything in Between

By Adiba Nelson

Adiba Nelson's journey into motherhood began with postpartum depression and a new baby with high medical needs. When she realizes she's falling into the same relationship patterns as her mother, Adiba vows to break the cycle.

BIOG HQ759.915 .N45 2022x

available as an audiobook
available as an eBook
graphic novel

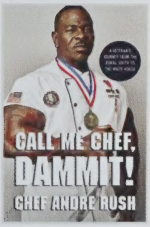


Bird Brother: A Falconer's Journey and the Healing Power of Wildlife

By Rodney Stotts

One of America's few Black master falconers shares his remarkable journey to becoming a conservationist.

BIOG QL31.S764 A3 2022

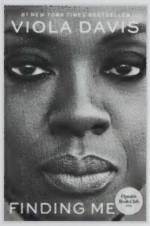


Call Me Chef, Dammit!

By Chef Andre Rush

Chef Andre Rush has served in the White House under four U.S. presidents, but his journey there was anything but easy. In his memoir, Chef Rush recounts how he overcame stereotypes, racism, and PTSD to become an advocate for wounded warriors and an award-winning chef.

BIOG TX649.R87 A3 2022x

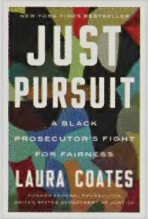


Finding Me

By Viola Davis

In her deeply personal memoir, renowned actress Viola Davis tells her life's story, from coming-of-age in a poor, abusive household to present day.

BIOG PN2287.D3225 A3 2022

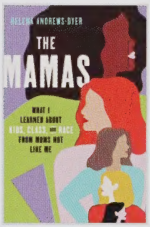


Just Pursuit: A Black Prosecutor's Fight for Fairness

By Laura Coates

In a groundbreaking account of bias in the courtroom, legal analyst Laura Coates recounts her time serving as a Black female prosecutor for the US Department of Justice.

BIOG KF373.C585 A3 2022



The Mamas: What I Learned About Kids, Class, and Race from Moms Not Like Me

By Helena Andrews-Dyer

A Black, professional, Ivy League-educated mom chronicles the challenges she faces in her local motherhood support group, where a reading list is the first step to solving systemic racism, and where the few Black members must overcompensate to be seen as equal.

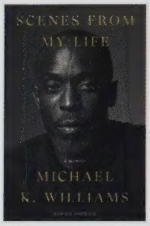
BIOG HQ759 .A533 2022

Manifesto: On Never Giving Up

By Bernardine Evaristo

A bestselling author tells the story of her personal life, her career as a writer, and her manifesto on unstoppability, creativity, and activism.

BIOG PR6055.V25 Z46 2022



Scenes from My Life

By Michael K. Williams

Actor Michael K. Williams, most known for his role on The Wire, had nearly finished the manuscript of his memoir when he died of an overdose in 2021. His co-author carries out his legacy with this release of Williams' memoir, where the late actor discusses his struggles with addiction, his desire to help others, and his ability to turn trauma and pain into art.

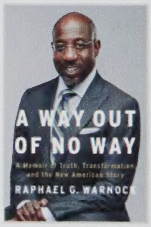
BIOG PN2287.W47285 A3 2022

Uphill

By Jemele Hill

In an unapologetic and eloquent memoir, journalist Jemele Hill talks about her work, the women of her family, and her relationship with God.

BIOG GV742.42.H55 A3 2022



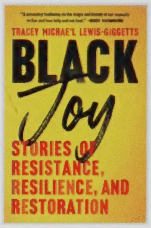
A Way Out of No Way: A Memoir of Truth, Transformation, and the New American Story

By Raphael G. Warnock

Georgia's first Black senator made history in 2021 when he won a runoff election that flipped control of the Senate at a pivotal moment. On the heels of his historic election to the United States Senate, he shares his remarkable spiritual and personal journey.

BIOG E901.1 .W367 2022

EXPRESSIONS

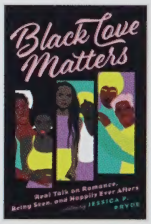


Black Joy: Stories of Resistance, Resilience, and Restoration

By Tracey M. Lewis-Giggetts

For Lewis-Giggetts, experiencing joy is a way to resist, heal, and challenge the singular narratives of trauma and hardship of Black folks. In these lyrical essays that are both personal and universal, Black joy is celebrated.

BIOG E185.86 .L495 2022



Black Love Matters: Real Talk on Romance, Being Seen, and Happily Ever Afters

By Jessica P. Pryde (ed.)

Black love and romance are finally and fully showcased in this collection of fourteen essays featuring a variety of voices and perspectives from revered authors, librarians, academicians, reviewers, readers, and more.

PS374.L6 B53 2022

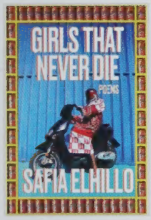
Gathering Blossoms Under Fire

By Alice Walker and Valerie Boyd (ed.)

Published for the first time, the edited journals of Alice Walker offer a behind the scenes look at the Pulitzer Prize winning author's life as a woman, a mother, a wife, a writer, an activist, and so much more.

BIOG PS3573.A425 Z46 2022

available as an audiobook
available as an eBook
graphic novel

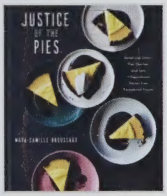


Girls That Never Die: Poems

By Safia Elhillo

In this intimate and deeply moving poetry collection, Safia Elhillo writes about Muslim girlhood, about the trauma and shame that girls and women face, and the violence both enacted and imagined against women's bodies. As Elhillo explores the shame and violence that accompany girlhood, she rewrites a world without them, where women are free.

PS3605.L385 G57 2022

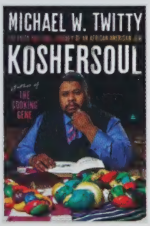


Justice of the Pies

By Maya-Camille Broussard

These 85 recipes from celebrated Chicago baker and star of Netflix's Bake Squad are inspired by social justice heroes found outside the kitchen and prove that good work and delicious food can go hand in hand.

TX773 .B85 2022

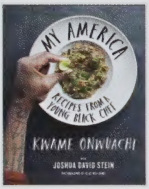


Koshersoul

By Michael W. Twitty

Award-winning chef and author Michael W. Twitty examines the culinary and cultural intersection of the African and Jewish diasporas with more than 48 recipes. What most intrigues him is not just who makes the food, but how the food makes the people.

TX724 .T85 2022



My America: Recipes from a Young Black Chef

By Kwame Onwuachi

Onwuachi presents the food handed down through his own family history, from Nigeria to the Caribbean, from the South to the Bronx, and beyond. These 125 recipes highlight the connection between food and place in "a land that belongs to you and yours and to me and mine."

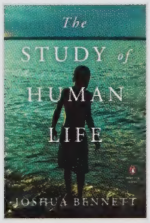
TX715.2.A47 .O59 2022

No Justice, No Peace: From the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter

By Devin Allen

This photography collection by award-winning photographer Devin Allen highlights and honors the Black activism of the past and its connection to the activism of today. Using words and captivating black and white images, Allen bears witness to the past while looking at the long road ahead.

E185.61 .N63 2022

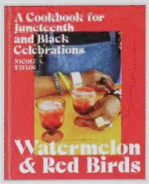


The Study of Human Life

By Joshua Bennett

A new collection from acclaimed poet Joshua Bennett features lyrical poems centering the Black experience, both real and imagined. In exploring the complexity of life, Bennett covers topics like abolition, ecological consciousness, and fatherhood.

PS3602.E664483 S78 2022



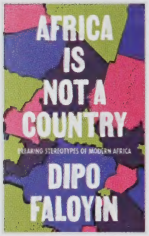
Watermelon and Red Birds: A Cookbook for Juneteenth and Black Celebrations

By Nicole A. Taylor

A celebrated food writer presents the very first cookbook dedicated to the federal holiday of Juneteenth, which celebrates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.

TX739.2.J86 T39 2022x

NONFICTION



Africa is Not a Country

By Dipo Faloyin

In his funny and insightful book, Dipo Faloyin corrects misconceptions of Africa to create a fresh and positive view of the continent. Including topics such as democracy in dictatorships, regional accents, urban life in Lagos, and the West African rivalry over who makes the best jollof rice, Faloyin leaves no stone unturned.

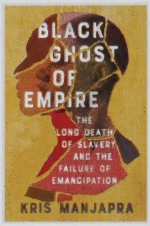
DT3 .F315 2022

Aphrochic

By Jeanine Hays and Bryan Mason

A powerful and visually stunning celebration of Black homeownership features inspiring home decor and family histories of notable Black Americans.

NK2115.3.A47 M37 2022



Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation

By Kris Manjapra

An acclaimed historian and professor identifies five types of emancipation, along with the lasting impact these transitions had on formerly enslaved groups around the Atlantic.

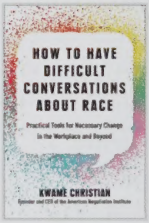
HM1266 .M38 2022

The Catch Me if You Can

By Jessica Nabongo

In this inspiring travelogue, the first Black woman on record to visit all 195 countries in the world shares her journey around the globe, including fascinating stories of adventure, culture, travel musts, and human connections.

G154.5.N34 A3 2022



How to Have Difficult Conversations About Race

By Kwame Christian

Whether you're a person of color looking to create change for yourself and other BIPOC, or a white ally seeking to support your coworkers, Kwame Christian will teach you how to overcome your internal barriers to talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

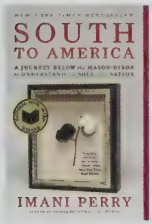
HF5549.5.M5 C478 2022

Of Blood and Sweat: Black Lives and the Making of White Power and Wealth

By Clyde W. Ford

From pre-colonial Africa through post-Civil War America, this painstakingly researched book documents how Black labor helped to create and sustain the wealth of the white one percent throughout history.

E185.8 .F67 2022

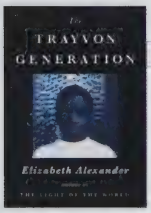


South to America

By Imani Perry

Interdisciplinary scholar Imani Perry takes the reader on an essential journey through the American South, showing how the history and culture of the South defines American identity as a whole.

F216.2 .P47 2022

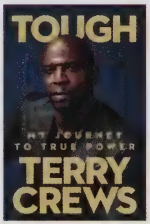


The Trayvon Generation

By Elizabeth Alexander

Expanding on her 2020 New Yorker essay that went viral, Alexander illuminates our nation's unresolved problem with race by sharing her reflections on the challenges facing young Black America.

E185.86 .A37945 2022



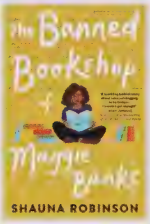
Tough: My Journey to True Power

By Terry Crews

When toxic masculinity led him down a road of addiction and unstable relationships, actor and former NFL star Terry Crews embarked on a quest to find the true meaning of toughness. In this inspirational book, he shares the lessons he learned along the way.

HQ1090 .C7435 2022

NONFICTION



The Banned Bookshop of Maggie Banks

By Shauna Robinson

When Maggie agrees to help run her best friend's failing bookstore, she doesn't anticipate being forbidden from selling anything written this century. Will Maggie be able to get creative and save the struggling bookstore, or will pressures from the literary society and a town secret ruin it all?

FICTION ROBINSON S

available as an audiobook
available as an eBook
graphic novel

Black Cake

By Charmaine Wilkerson

Two estranged siblings are reunited by a puzzling inheritance left behind after their mother's death. Will the pair be able to set aside their differences to deal with the loss of their mother, discover the secrets of her hidden past, and fulfill her deathbed request?

FICTION WILKERSO C

Braking Day

By Adam Oyebanji

An engineer-in-training on a generation ship that escaped an inhospitable Earth sees the impossible: a young woman floating out in space without a helmet... and he's the only one who can see her.

SCIFI FANTASY OYEBANJI A

The Final Strife

By Saara El-Arifi

In the first book of a visionary African and Arabian-inspired fantasy trilogy, three women band together against a cruel Empire that divides people into castes based on the color of their blood.

SCIFI FANTASY ELARIFI S

The Legacy of Molly Southbourne

By Tade Thompson

Whenever Molly Southbourne bleeds, a murderer is born: a new, identical Molly intent on destroying their creator. In the thrilling conclusion to the Molly Southborne trilogy, a legion of these creations band together in the hopes of finding peace.

SCIFI FANTASY THOMPSON T

The Library of the Dead

By T.L. Huchu

Ropa is a ghost talker who speaks to the dead and carries messages to the ones they left behind. But when the dead whisper that someone's bewitching children, Ropa must use her Zimbabwean magic and Scottish pragmatism to investigate.

SCIFI FANTASY HUCHU T

The Memory Librarian: And Other Stories of Dirty Computer

By Janelle Monáe

A thought-provoking collection written by Janelle Monáe and a variety of talented creators features tales of a world where thoughts and memories are created or erased by a select few who have claimed the right to decide others' fates.

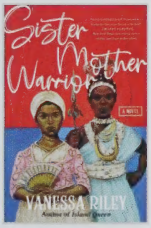
SCIFI FANTASY MONAE J

My Government Means to Kill Me

By Rasheed Newson

A fierce and riveting queer coming-of-age story follows the personal and political awakening of a young gay Black man in 1980s NYC.

FICTION NEWSON R



Sister Mother Warrior

By Vanessa Riley

A gripping and compelling novel of the Haitian Revolution inspired by the true stories of two powerful women and their key roles in the revolution that would free Haiti and its people.

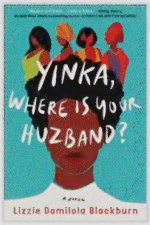
FICTION RILEY V

These Impossible Things

By Salma El-Wardany

As three Muslim best friends who grew up together begin to drift apart, they must work hard to come together and find a balance between their families' traditional expectations and their own dreams.

FICTION ELWARDAN S

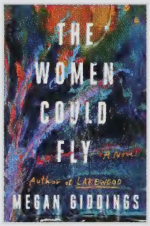


Yinka, Where Is Your Huzband?

By Lizzie Damilola Blackburn

Despite her Oxford education and well-paying job, Yinka can't escape her mother's nagging about her lack of a husband. When her cousin gets engaged, Yinka tasks herself with finding a date for the wedding. But what if the thing she really needs to find is herself?

FICTION BLACKBUR L



The Women Could Fly

By Megan Giddings

A powerful novel featuring an oppressive dystopian world where women are forced to either marry by 30 or register with the Bureau of Witchcraft. Protagonist Jo struggles with this choice, and as she continues to heal from the loss of her mother, decides to embark on a journey that will honor her mom.

FICTION GIDDINGS M

available as an audiobook
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graphic novel

ROMANCE

A Ghost in Shining Armor

By Therese Beharrie

In this slow-burn paranormal romance, Gemma Daniels kisses a stranger at a bachelorette party, unaware that he's a ghost on a mission to help her reunite with her long-lost twin sister... and gain a second chance at life.

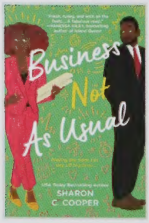
ROMANCE BEHARRIE T

Blurred Lines

By Keith Thomas Walker

When investigating the cold case of her daughter's death, grieving mother Kelli crosses paths with the detective who worked on the case. Damien knows it's not right to get involved, but he is drawn to Kelli and her quest for justice.

ROMANCE WALKER



Business Not as Usual

By Sharon C. Cooper

Dreamy has big plans to open a nonprofit as soon as she hits the lottery, but she is struggling to make ends meet. Karter grew up around wealth and uses his privilege to invest in small businesses. Will Karter and Dreamy win the lottery of love?

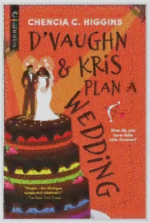
ROMANCE COOPER S

By the Book

By Jasmine Guillory

In this unique reimagining of Beauty and the Beast, editorial assistant Isabelle gets more than she bargained for when she decides to work with a beastly author who has failed to deliver his latest manuscript.

FICTION GUILLORY J

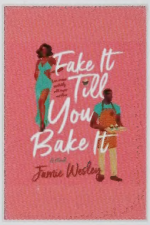


D'Vaughn & Kris Plan a Wedding

By Chencia C. Higgins

To elevate her brand, a closeted social media influencer goes on a reality TV show that gives her six weeks to convince her family and friends she's getting married to the love of her life. Will this fake marriage turn into the real deal, or will the show pull them apart?

ROMANCE HIGGINS C

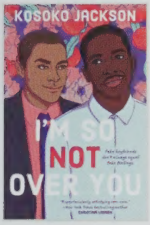


Fake It Till You Bake It

By Jamie Wesley

After making waves on a reality tv dating show, Jada takes a job at a failing cupcake bakery run by football star Donovan Dell. In order to save the bakery and restore Jada's image, the two decide to fake a relationship... but will that be a recipe for disaster?

ROMANCE WESLEY J

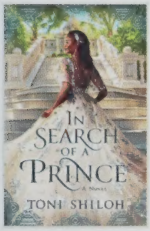


I'm So (not) Over You

By Kosoko Jackson

When his ex-boyfriend asks him to pretend that they're still dating, Kian reluctantly agrees. Could a fake relationship be the answer to the real feelings Kian still harbors for his ex?

ROMANCE JACKSON K



In Search of a Prince

By Toni Shiloh

Brielle Adebayo's simple life unravels when she discovers she is a princess in the African kingdom of Oloro Ilé and must immediately assume her royal position, where she learns about the island's culture and language with the help of a handsome tutor.

ROMANCE SHILOH T

The Romantic Agenda

By Claire Kann

Thirty, flirty, and asexual Joy is heartbroken when her best friend and secret crush falls for someone else. Joy is determined to show him exactly what he's missing out on, but maybe she is the one overlooking someone else.

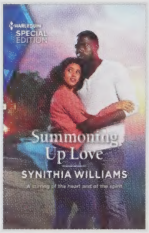
ROMANCE KANN C

Something So Sweet

By Joy Avery

Lunden is the Mayor of Honey Hill, a small Southern town known for its honeybees. She loves her town and its history. When her former lover, Quade, returns to sell his family's historic inn, Lunden is determined to change his mind, and maybe his heart...

ROMANCE AVERY J



Summoning Up Love

By Synithia Williams

Journalist Vanessa heads to her grandmother's home after losing her job and her boyfriend, where she finds paranormal investigator Dion chasing a "ghost." Convinced it's a scam, Vanessa ignores her attraction to Dion and heads into the unknown.

ROMANCE WILLIAMS S

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